

Dear Senator Harp,

3/21/11

My name is David Cooper and I am a Sophomore in the Ellis Clark Regional Agriscience and Technology Program in Woodbury. I live in Seymour, Connecticut and I attend this regional agriscience school choice Program because I've dreamed to be a vet and this program is the best possible opportunity I could get to fulfill that dream. When I was only in 7th grade my family and I had heard about Nonnewaug High School, a school that would provide me a better education than that of my hometown's high school, a characteristic that was important to me. Yet I also saw that this program could provide me with the agricultural experience of one of the top agriscience programs in the country, an experience in the veterinary fields that I would not be able to get anywhere else until college.

I was able to apply to the agriscience program, and eventually be accepted for my Freshman year, which was a chance that I will never forget. Because of my acceptance into Nonnewaug I have received a great education in my base classes of any school such as Mathematics, Science, and History, yet also the experience of Agricultural classes such as Vet Science, which is not available in many areas. Since I have been at Nonnewaug and have been involved in the Ellis Clark Regional Agriscience and Technology Program, I have gotten involved in the entirety of the FFA, with all aspects making an influence on me. I obtained my first job through my SAE (Supervised Agricultural Education) as a volunteer at the Meriden Humane Society. I have also seen first hand veterinary techniques I will need later if I can still pursue my career choice as a vet such as injections, castration, MRI's, etc. Overall this program has made an immense influence on me and what I will be able to do after I leave this school to pursue the college of my choice. Because of this agriscience program, I have gone through more progress and growth in my own character and education than probably the entirety of my elementary or middle school experience; an experience that others should also receive.

Again, I am writing this letter to encourage you to **please urge the Appropriations Committee to pledge 9 million dollars of the school choice funding increases proposed in the Governor's budget to the state's 19 regional (vo-ag) agriscience programs.** Our agriscience programs have been drastically underfunded for over 20 years as compared to the magnet schools, charter schools, vocational technical schools and the other school choice funding programs. This will allow hundreds of more students like me to enroll in these successful programs so they will have the same positive experience I am having now. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



David Cooper